

LANDMARK DESIGNATION REPORT

LANDMARK NAME: Cooper-Bland House
OWNERS: Robert F. Bland Jr. and Louise Bland
APPLICANTS: Same
LOCATION: 3262 Ella Lee Lane – River Oaks

AGENDA ITEM: II.b
HPO FILE NO: 13-L276
DATE ACCEPTED: 11/19/2012
HAHC HEARING: 04/18/2013

SITE INFORMATION

Lt. 2, Block 21, River Oaks Sec. 4, City of Houston, Harris County, Texas. The building on the site is a historic two-story brick residence.

TYPE OF APPROVAL REQUESTED: Landmark Designation

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE SUMMARY

The residence at 3262 Ella Lee Lane, designed by well-known architect Cameron Fairchild, was built in 1935 for Robert and Bessie Cooper. Cooper was a land agent for Humble Oil, where he remained for his entire working life. The home was later owned by Robert and Betty Bland. The house is designed in the Colonial Revival style.

The Cooper-Bland House meets Criteria 1, 4, and 6 for Landmark Designation.

HISTORY AND SIGNIFICANCE

The house at 3262 Ella Lee Lane was listed in the Texas General Contractors Association's *Monthly Bulletin* in December, 1934. Robert Cooper awarded the building contract to B.I Sparks for the two-story, 7 room house at a cost of \$10,000.¹ The Coopers moved to River Oaks from a house on Banks Street.

Robert Berry Cooper was born on August 5, 1889 in New Albany, Mississippi. By 1917, he was working in Clarksdale, MS, as a bank-keeper at the Bank of Clarksdale and was single. He served in the Army Air Corps from 1917 until 1919. Once released from service, Cooper moved to Houston and went to work for Humble Oil as a roustabout at the West Columbia oil field.

He married Bessie Armitage, who had been a stenographer at the Bank of Clarksdale. They had no children. Robert Cooper died on June 5, 1963. His obituary lists him as a retired Humble Oil Executive, who was the head of Humble's land and lease department for 23 years. The Coopers were living in the house at the time of Robert's death. Mrs. Cooper was still living in the house in 1967.

The next owners, Robert and Betty Bland, purchased the home in the late 1960s. Their son, Robert Bland, and his wife, Louise Riddell Bland, purchased the house in 2002.

¹ Texas General Contractors Association Monthly Bulletin, December, 1934.

CITY OF HOUSTON

Archaeological & Historical Commission

Planning and Development Department

Cameron Fairchild

Cameron Douglas Fairchild was born on August 20, 1902 in Waco, Texas. He attended Southwestern University and the University of Texas, where he was a member of Alpha Rho Chi, the architecture fraternity. He graduated from the University of Texas in 1924 and began his architectural practice in Houston in 1925. He quickly became known for his residential architecture. He designed homes in Houston's top neighborhoods, including River Oaks, Shadowlawn, Old Braeswood, Riverside Terrace, and Boulevard Oaks. In River Oaks, he was commissioned by the River Oaks Corporation to design the River Oaks Court homes, the first homes built on the court lots on Stanmore Drive. His firm also designed the River Oaks Apartments (high-rise) at 3435 Westheimer.

Fairchild also worked across the state. In Galveston, he designed homes on Broadway, in Denver Harbor and Cedar Lawn. He was also the architect of Galveston's Windsor Court Apartments (1705 35th Street (1937)) and UTMB's dormitory Nolan Hall (1955). Fairchild also served as the campus architect at Southwestern University before and after his deployment during World War II. At Southwestern, he designed the chapel with university president Dr. J.N.R. Score. He also designed the Taylor City Library, constructed in 1960.

In River Oaks, Fairchild designed the following homes:

959	Kirby Drive	3195	Del Monte Dr.
1001	Kirby Drive	3207	Inwood Dr.
959	Kirby Dr.	3208	Avalon Place
1001	Kirby Dr.	3209	Ella Lee Lane
1812	Kirby Dr.	3220	Avalon Place
2107	Bellmeade Road	3262	Ella Lee Lane
2112	Brentwood Dr.	3320	Del Monte Dr.
2120	Troon Road	3335	Chevy Chase Dr.
2212	Looscan Lane	3403	Locke Lane
2221	River Oaks Blvd.	3431	Inwood Dr.
2232	Troon Road	3435	Piping Rock Lane
2521	Stanmore Dr.	3506	Del Monte Dr.
2523	Stanmore Dr.	3645	Del Monte Dr.
2525	Stanmore Dr.	3677	Willowick Road
2529	Stanmore Dr.	3722	Knollwood Dr.
3038	San Felipe Road	3244	Ella Lee Lane
3044	San Felipe Road	2221	River Oaks Blvd.

During World War II, Fairchild served as a Major in the Air Force where he and helped develop frangible bullets for use by the Army. He continued his architectural practice through the 1960s. He died June 6, 1985 in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and was buried in Taylor, Texas.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION AND RESTORATION HISTORY

3262 Ella Lee Lane was designed in the Colonial Revival style by Cameron Fairchild. The house retains the simple lines of the 1930s traditional home. The plan of the house is L-shaped with a

projecting wing on the east end of the house. The 4,682 square foot house is sited facing South in the center of an 11,400 square foot lot.

The exterior of the house features a painted brick veneer. The roof is a side gabled roof with a front gable on the east projection. The roof is comprised of asphalt shingles.

The entry of the house is located to the west of the front projection. It consists of a simple single-lite wood door flanked with fluted pilasters and an entablature. There is no portico or porch. The door is recessed slightly from the frame. An iron light fixture hangs above the doorway on the front façade. Above the door on the second story façade is a 6-over-6 wood sash window.

To the west of the doorway are two 6-over-9 wood sash windows. On the far west of the first floor façade is a rectangular bay window projection with wood frames and rectangular panels of glass. Wood trim details the window.

Above, on the second floor façade are four 6-over-6 wood sash windows (including the previously described window over the entry).

The eastern portion of the house, east of the entry, projects forward. On the first floor of this projection are two 6-over-9 wood sash windows. On the second story, are two 6-over-6 wood sash windows. A brick chimney is located to the side of the eastern projection (on the east elevation).

The house is in excellent condition.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

“Brittle Bullets”, *Popular Science*, May, 1945.

City Directories, 1928 through current.

“Obituary for Robert Cooper”, *Houston Chronicle*, June 6, 1963.

Various resources from Ancestry.com

The information and sources provided by the applicant for this application have been reviewed, verified, edited and supplemented with additional research and sources by Erin Glennon and Matthew Kriegl, Planning and Development Department, City of Houston.

APPROVAL CRITERIA FOR LANDMARK DESIGNATION**Sec. 33-224. Criteria for designation**

(a) The HAHC, in making recommendations with respect to designation, and the city council, in making a designation, shall consider one or more of the following criteria, as appropriate for the type of designation:

S	NA		S - satisfies	D - does not satisfy	NA - not applicable
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(1) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area possesses character, interest or value as a visible reminder of the development, heritage, and cultural and ethnic diversity of the city, state, or nation;			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	(2) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area is the location of a significant local, state or national event;			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	(3) Whether the building, structure, object, site or area is identified with a person who, or group or event that, contributed significantly to the cultural or historical development of the city, state, or nation;			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(4) Whether the building or structure or the buildings or structures within the area exemplify a particular architectural style or building type important to the city;			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	(5) Whether the building or structure or the buildings or structures within the area are the best remaining examples of an architectural style or building type in a neighborhood;			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(6) Whether the building, structure, object or site or the buildings, structures, objects or sites within the area are identified as the work of a person or group whose work has influenced the heritage of the city, state, or nation;			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	(7) Whether specific evidence exists that unique archaeological resources are present;			
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	(8) Whether the building, structure, object or site has value as a significant element of community sentiment or public pride.			
AND					
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	(9) If less than 50 years old, or proposed historic district containing a majority of buildings, structures, or objects that are less than 50 years old, whether the building, structure, object, site, or area is of extraordinary importance to the city, state or nation for reasons not based on age (Sec. 33-224(b)).			

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Houston Archaeological and Historical Commission recommend to City Council the Landmark Designation of the Cooper-Bland House at 3262 Ella Lee Lane.

CITY OF HOUSTON

Archaeological & Historical Commission

Planning and Development Department

EXHIBIT A

PHOTO

Cooper-Bland House
3262 Ella Lee Lane



EXHIBIT B
SITE LOCATION MAP
Cooper-Bland House
3262 Ella Lee Lane

